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Featured Artist

SARA EMSAKI | *University of California, Berkeley*

ARTIST STATEMENT

Women of Iran have been veiled, unveiled, and re-veiled as the country has gone through revolutions and regimes. The artwork produced during the Qajar dynasty era (1785-1925) depicts women in the intimate environment of the harem, intoxicated and eroticized. These paintings oddly contradicted Persia's firmly Islamic society. Through the re-appropriation of these images, I visualize new scenarios and fantasies in which women play prohibited and unusual roles—engaging in sexual affairs with other females, holding weapons, and possessing super powers. As an Iranian woman who grew up with constrained liberties, it is empowering to recreate images that question the ones that were once predominantly made by men.

BIO

Iranian born-Oakland based artist, Sara Emsaki, works primarily in painting, re-appropriating images that target gender roles and their subsequent power dynamics. Her work is aesthetically influenced by Islamic geometry and Persian miniature painting. She is a recipient of the 2015 Wendy Sussman award in painting and the Eisner Prize for the highest achievement in the creative arts. Emsaki gained a BFA in 2016 from the University of California, Berkeley, with an honors distinction.







